

The sub-committee for handbook revisions of the Wethersfield Historic District Commission held a Public Meeting on November 13, 2012 in the Town Manager's Office at the Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

Members Present: Robert Garrey, Chairman
Douglas Ovian, Alternate
Lisa Wurzer, Alternate

Members Absent:

Also Present: Kristin Stearley, Historic District Coordinator

Commissioner Garrey, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 8:55 PM.

Discussions continued regarding possible revisions to the handbook. The following changes have been proposed to be presented to the full commission at the next regularly scheduled meeting:

Proposed Changes to the Historic District Commission Handbook 2012

September 25, 2012

1. TITLE PAGE – Insert – “2012 Edition”
2. PAGE 3 – Eliminate the reference to individual names and just state “Commissioners” and “Coordinator”, and “Planner”.
3. PAGE 7 – first ¶ - last sentence – “The Commission has developed this handbook in hopes of providing Historic District residents with a clear understanding of the process of applying to the Commission *and with some useful information regarding the role of the Commission.*”
4. PAGE 7 – Second ¶ - second sentence – “We believe that buildings *from all time periods* are an integral part of the architectural landscape of the district and are as worthy of preservation as *historic structures.*” Second ¶ - fifth sentence – “In fact, the philosophical goal of historic preservation is not to freeze time, but to integrate the necessary and desirable changes that are signs of our neighborhoods’ continuing *evolution and vitality.*”
5. PAGE 13 – Third ¶ - second sentence – “*As defined by state statute*, **all structures located within the district, regardless of age or style, are regulated.**”
6. PAGE 14 – Second ¶ - last sentence – “Failure to comply with Historic District regulations may make a property owner and his or her agents liable for both fines and related legal expenses *in addition to compliance with the Commission’s decision.*”
7. PAGE 17 – SITE FIXTURES & STRUCTURES including but not limited to: Insert – “*Sculptures or permanent decorative structures*”
8. PAGE 19 – ROUTINE MAINTENANCE & REPAIR – “*Siding and roofing repairs which match existing exactly*” and “**Exact** replacement of existing architectural and site features” - emphasis on the bolded words.
9. PAGE 19 – TEMPORARY FIXTURES & STRUCTURES - “Construction dumpsters, trailers, toilets, security fencing, *utilities, pods and storage units in place less than 180 days*”
10. PAGE 25 – This is a sample copy of an application. Remove the reference to the fee amount and watermark the application “Sample Application”

October 9, 2012

1. PAGE 39 - Second ¶ - second sentence – “These guidelines have been established to set some standards of consistency and provide a degree of predictability, *however each application is based on its own merit.*”
2. PAGE 40 – Second ¶ - “We recommend that [*new – removed*] construction be harmonious with its immediate historic environment and should *also* reflect the *character, scale, massing and traditions* of the immediate area and the district. *We encourage excellence in design that is compatible with the broad diversity of styles, periods, and materials represented in the district.*
3. PAGE 41 - Second ¶ - first sentence – “We do not permit the demolition of structures that *are considered important to the district unless there is no prudent alternative.*
4. PAGE 47 – Exterior Architectural Elements – Eliminate *Skylights* from the list. This description has been removed from the narrative.
5. PAGE 59 – Eliminate the second line of the indented description of shutters. ~~“If louvered shutters are used, louvers should face upward in an open position.”~~
6. PAGE 59 – Sidewalks and Roadways – Second ¶ - “*Non-residential* sidewalks and roadways which are viewable from any public way are regulated by the Historic District Commission.”
7. PAGE 60 – Siding – Second ¶ - sixth sentence – “Replacement *siding* must match the color, texture, shape and pattern of existing portions.”
8. PAGE 61 – First sentence – “The Commission will consider approving siding products that *replicate the look of the original in appearance and texture. Any replacement siding also requires a building permit in addition to a Certificate of Appropriateness.*
9. PAGE 61 – Signs – First ¶ - fourth sentence – “Temporary signs and banners are not regulated [insert the word *by*] the Historic District Commission.”
10. PAGE 62 – Eliminate the category – Skylights – “~~Historically, skylights were not used because of technical difficulties and therefore should be relegated to parts of the house not visible from the street. A well designed dormer, where appropriate, will serve the same purpose as well as increasing the living space.~~”
11. PAGE 62- Sunrooms – Eliminate the first sentence – “~~Modern day sunrooms evolved from traditional conservatories and should reflect those origins.~~”
12. PAGE 64- Windows – Eliminate the last two sentences – “~~By 1850, use of coal allowed for increase in the number and size of windows. Bay windows were introduced at this time.~~”
13. PAGE 65- Windows – First ¶ - “New buildings typically should have *windows that are consistent with the architectural style of the structure. Existing additions should have windows that reflect the character and proportions of the structure*, though they may be diminished in scale to reflect the secondary importance of the addition to the main massing of the building.”
14. PAGE 65 - Windows – Second ¶ - Eliminate the last sentence – “~~Windows without historic precedence should not be added to existing primary architectural facades.~~”
15. PAGE 65 - Windows – Third ¶ - second sentence – “Replacement of window *may be permitted*, if in keeping with the [*exact - removed*] design of the original.”
16. PAGE 65- Windows – Third ¶ -third sentence – bold the first word – “**Replacement** of true divided lights with snap-in grilles or grids between the glass (GBG) are inappropriate.”
17. PAGE 65- Windows – Third ¶ -Eliminate the fourth, fifth, and sixth sentences – “~~Many window replacement products with insulating glass require thicker muntins which may be inappropriate for the style of house. Wood windows should be replaced with wood windows. Windows with factory applied paint are preferred to vinyl or aluminum clad windows.~~”
18. PAGE 65 – Add the following sentence to the end of the page – “*Window replacement does require a building permit in addition to a Certificate of Appropriateness.*”

November 13, 2012

1. PAGE 3 – Add the word “*Published*” to the line detailing the date October 2003 so it will read “*Published October 2003*” and add another line below this line which states, “*Amended in 2008 and 2012*”.
2. Page 22 – first ¶, first line – “An Application for Certificate of Appropriateness may be obtained at the Wethersfield Town Building Department, *on the town’s website* (www.wethersfieldct.com), or at any regularly scheduled meeting of the HDC.”
3. Page 23 – Bold the last sentence to emphasize other permit requirements - “**Applicants are advised that Historic District Commission approval does no preclude the need for any other required permits, such as Planning and Zoning, Inland Wetlands, or Building.**”
4. Page 27 – first ¶ - last sentence – eliminate the reference to the library as paper records are no longer kept there. “All records are available for public review at the Wethersfield Building Department.”
5. Page 32 – second ¶ - first sentence - change the title of the Building Inspector to read – “If the Commission denies the application, written notice will be sent to the applicant and *the Chief Building and Zoning Official.*”
6. Include the Administrative Authority for the Historic District Coordinator materials.

Administrative Authority for the Historic District Coordinator

The Historic District Commission has granted administrative approval to the Historic District Coordinator in an effort to streamline the permitting process of selected improvements for homeowners in the Historic District. Following is an explanation of what can be administratively approved and will not require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

MECHANICALS

The Historic District Commission expects that all mechanicals shall be placed on the property in the areas with limited/no public view which include the rear and sides of the building. **Any mechanical/utility which is required to be placed on the front façade shall first obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic District Commission prior to applying for any building, electrical or plumbing permit with the Wethersfield Building Department.**

Air Conditioning Condenser – All condenser units shall be located at the rear of the building where there is limited/no public view. When there is no other alternative but to place the unit on the side of the building or within public view, the unit must be screened with evergreen shrubbery or with wood fencing that shall be 100% dense and of a proper height to obstruct the public view. **Unit placement must be documented on a plot plan, a description/photograph of the unit, and details of the screening must accompany any plumbing permit.**

Generator – All generators shall be located at the rear of the building where there is limited/no public view. Where there is no other alternative but to place the unit on the side of the building or within public view, the unit must be screened with evergreen shrubbery or with wood fencing that shall be 100% dense and of a proper height to obstruct the public view. **Unit placement must be documented on a plot plan, a description/photograph of the unit, and details of the screening must accompany any plumbing permit application.**

In the instances when a propane tank is required to fuel the generator, the propane tank must first receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic District Commission.

Direct Vent/Hot Water Heating System Venting – All venting for direct vent/hot water heating systems shall be located at the rear of the building where there is limited/no public view. Where there is no other alternative but to place the venting on the side of the building or within public view, the venting must be screened with evergreen shrubbery. The venting shall be painted to match the color of the home. **Venting placement must be documented on a plot plan, a description/photograph of the venting, and details of the screening must accompany any plumbing permit application.**

ROOFING

Any **exact** color and material repair or replacement of roofing shall be administratively approved by the Historic District Coordinator on an application for a building permit. This shall be considered an "in-kind" repair or replacement.

Original restoration of roofing material shall be administratively approved by the Historic District Coordinator on an application for a building permit.

The Building Department also has pre-approved asphalt shingle colors available for review. If an asphalt roof is being replaced with a new asphalt roof, the homeowner has the choice of using the same color as what currently exists or using one of the pre-approved colors. The Historic District Coordinator shall administratively approve the building permit application.

The name of the manufacturer and the name of the color must accompany any building permit application for asphalt roofing material.

MICELLANEOUS

The Historic District Coordinator shall administratively approve permit applications to install venting pipes for heating appliances and bathrooms that must go through the roof. These pipes must be painted matte black. These pipes must remain open and shall not have caps. If a cap is required, a Certificate of Appropriateness must first be obtained from the Historic District Commission. **Venting pipe placement must be documented on a plot plan as well as the materials and dimensions of the pipe must accompany any building or plumbing permit application.**

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Commissioner Garrey, seconded by Commissioner Wurzer and a poll of the Commission, it was unanimously voted to close discussions and present the proposed revisions to the full Commission at the regular meeting scheduled for November 27, 2012 and to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 PM.

Aye: Garrey, Ovian, Wurzer

Respectfully Submitted
TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Robert Garrey
Chairman